

Jonathan Spaulding

95 S Berkeley Ave
Pasadena CA 91107

June 27, 2011

Ann M. Muscat, Ph.D.
President/CEO
Catalina Island Conservancy
P. O. Box 2739
Avalon, CA 90704

Dear Ann,

I appreciate the update from you on the status of the Eagles Nest Lodge project and the Conservancy's strategic master plan for the Middle Ranch site and all of its properties on Catalina. The evolution of your ideas is very exciting and I support enthusiastically your efforts to preserve the historic as well as the biological fabric of Catalina Island. The effort to preserve and interpret the history of human occupancy on the Island and to share that history with the public is an important part of the Conservancy's mission.

Having explored the Eagles Nest structure and its current site during your earlier planning development phase, I recall the remarkable power of the building and its interior to evoke the feeling of an older era on the Island. I observed, however, the serious flood damage in the area around the current site and its isolation from other parts of the Middle Ranch experience. Given that extensive restoration of the structure is required to bring it up to a condition safe for public interpretive use, I agree strongly that moving it to a more stable and accessible location would be the ideal solution to preserve its history. Your intention to restore the lodge to the same footprint and in the same manner as you would have at the original location is exactly the right way to approach the concept of a move.

Grouping the interpretation of the earlier history of the Island in the Middle Ranch site makes perfect sense for the visitor experience. People are more likely to stop and more likely to take in the content of the stories. These stories of human occupancy--tourism, hunting and ranching--that Eagles Nest Lodge was a significant part of do not need to be strung out along the route. In fact, they are best presented all at once, in a beautiful and compelling setting. From what I have heard, it makes a great deal of sense from an environmental standpoint as well, to remove the structure from its flood-prone current location. I also am pleased that the site chosen is already impacted (previous hay fields) and will not result in compromising the integrity of intact habitat. It is my understanding that the majority of people from Avalon will also approach Middle Ranch from this direction so that Eagles Nest Lodge and its stories will be their first experience with the broader site. From the visitor's stand point it has great potential to use the

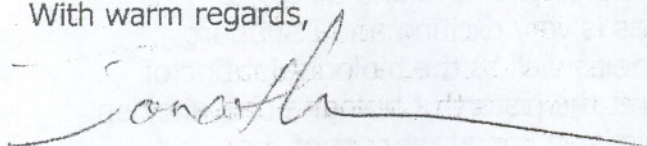
Jonathan Spaulding

95 S Berkeley Ave
Pasadena CA 91107

intrigue of historical buildings and their stories of the past as a gateway to Middle Ranch and the contemporary conservation work that will occur at the biological field station further along the road.

In my opinion, maintaining the location along Middle Ranch Road on the other side of Middle Ranch does not compromise the integrity of the historical thread at all, but in fact has the potential to enhance it. My extensive experience with exhibition planning is that story elements need to be focused and concise for visitors to engage with them and to understand them. Focusing the interpretation of this particular era around the proposed site will increase and motivate visitor engagement and understanding of key elements in the history of the Island.

With warm regards,



Jonathan Spaulding, Ph.D.

Jonathan Spaulding is currently developing The Museum of Los Angeles, an experimental project that includes collaboration between cultural institutions and a mobile museum. From 2005 through 2010, he was Vice President for Exhibitions at the Autry National Center and Executive Director of the Museum of the American West. In addition to all regularly scheduled exhibitions, he led content and design development for the Autry's 220,000-square-foot expansion and renovation of its Griffith Park campus. From 2000 through 2005, Jonathan was associate curator of history and director of the Seaver Center for Western History Research at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, where he developed collaborative projects with USC's Archival Research Center, served on the Natural History Museum's master planning team, and curated a number of exhibitions, including the landmark L.A.: Light / Motion / Dreams.

Born in Pasadena, California, Jonathan received a B.A. from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and a Ph.D. in history from the University of California, Los Angeles. Through the 1980s and 1990s, he worked on several documentary films for PBS television. He is the author of *Ansel Adams and the American Landscape: A Biography*, published in 1995 by the University of California Press, and co-author of *Edward Weston: A Legacy*, published by Merrell in 2003.